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AUTHOR	Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

Listening is relevant in all academic disciplines and in the "curriculum of life." The purpose or reasons for listening depend upon the speaking activity involved--thus listening in a conversation is different from listening to follow directions. The teacher needs to establish clear purposes or objectives for learners in the area of listening. To emphasize intrinsic motivation, the teacher needs to make learning opportunities interesting so that learners have an inward desire to learn. Becoming a good learner is ongoing and continuous. The goals established by the teacher for listening should be comprehensive and achievable--there should be balance among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor goals. Objectives need to have a quality sequence so that students individually can be successful learners. Learning opportunities to achieve the objectives should provide for diverse achievement levels of learning among learners. Concrete, semi-concrete, and abstract experiences in listening should be offered. Evaluation procedures to ascertain learner progress need to be varied and need to assist in determining how well students are doing. Diagnosis and remediation are inherent concepts when viewing results from the evaluation process. (NKA)

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Improving Pupil Listening.

by Marlow Ediger

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IMPROVING PUPIL LISTENING

Elementary school pupils need to attain as optimally as possible in listening. Listening is a language arts area and is a basics in the curriculum. Thus listening is relevant in all academic disciplines and in the curriculum of life. Much information is acquired from listening. This means that a person must become a critical listener and appraise content received as input. Listening too has diverse purposes. There are numerous reasons why people listen. The purpose or reasons for listening depend upon the speaking activity involved. Thus listening in a conversation is different from that involved in listening to follow directions. It behooves the teacher to establish worthwhile objectives in listening for pupils to attain. These objectives cut across all curriculum areas.

Listening within Discussions

Pupils are involved in classroom discussions frequently. Many times the discussions center around discussing what has been read from reading materials pertaining to diverse curriculum areas such as literature, social, studies, science, health, among others. To learn much during the discussion, careful listening is necessary. Here, learners need to listen for a variety of purposes such as

1. listening for facts, concepts, and main ideas.
2. listening to apprise content presented.
3. listening to detect bias and band wagon statements.
4. listening to secure specific information.
5. listening to obtain subject matter relevant for problem solving.
6. listening to ideas for purposes of enjoyment and appreciation.
7. listening to determine factual content as compared to the fanciful.
8. listening to separate that which has accuracy versus that which lacks criteria of accuracy.
9. listening to follow directions in order that an exercise may be

worked correctly, such as in a work book.

10. listening to assess reality from creative ideas expressed.

Objectives in Listening

The teacher needs to establish clear purposes or objectives for learners in the area of listening. If precise measurably stated objectives are used in teaching, the following are examples:

1. After listening to the cassette, the pupil will list in writing two facts and two opinions. Here, as a listening activity, the pupil must write two facts and two opinions as a part of a critical listening experience. The numeral two is a minimal level of achievement. If a pupil can list more than two two each, so much the better. The cassette tape and its contents relate directly to the stated objective. The teacher can definite evaluate if learners have been successful on learning as a result of having listened to the tape. Either a pupil has or has not attained the objective as a result of the listening activity.

2. The pupil will write a summary after listening to the classroom discussion in an ongoing lesson. The teacher could even state the length of the needed summary such as 100 words as a minimal level to achieve. Prior to the activity, the teacher should model the writing of a summary and discuss what makes for a summary. Pupils should always be clear on what is expected of them in terms of what is to be learned. Behaviorists who advocate using measurably stated objectives in teaching (behaviorally state objectives) advocate the teacher swaying to learners, prior to instruction, what the latter is to learn as a result of instruction.

Objectives of instruction may also be stressed as general objectives. These ends are more open ended as compared to the use of behaviorally stated objectives. General objectives should not be vaguely written. Vague, general objectives provide little or no guidance in teaching. For example, consider the following broad goal to stress in teaching: To develop within pupils a desire to become a better listener.

No one would argue about the worth and desire to have all pupils wanting to become good listeners. However, there needs to be clarity as to what is to be attained by learners in the area of listening. Thus the objective could be sharpened as a quality general objective to state the following: To develop within the pupil skill to listen creatively by providing a different ending to a story as presented on video tape. Here, the pupil needs to listen to a story on video tape and writing or saying orally a different ending as compared to that presented. Creativity requires unique, novel, original ideas from learners.

Teachers must develop quality objectives for pupil attainment in listening. These ends must be carefully chosen so that trivia are eliminated.

Learning Activities to Achieve Objectives

Teachers need to select learning opportunities so that each learner might be successful in goal attainment. The learning opportunities should gain the attention of pupils; otherwise objectives may not be attained. These activities should be comprehendible and make sense to the learner. Meaning and understanding should result from pupils interacting with each learning opportunity. Intrinsic motivation is the ideal in learning; pupils then learn due to an inward desire to do so. If intrinsic motivation does not appear to work, extrinsic procedures may be used such a rewarding pupils with inexpensive prizes for attaining at a desired level. Here, the teacher should announce prior to instruction what pupils are to learn as a result of teaching and learning to secure a prize. Pupils then receive a reward for goal attainment.

To emphasize intrinsic motivation, the teacher needs to make learning opportunities interesting so that learners have an inward desire to learn. Teachers should explain to pupils why it is salient to learn selected content and skills. With the explanation, learners will feel worth in studying and achieving. Deduction is used here to guide pupils to perceive reasons for learning. Thus the explanation moves from the teacher to the pupil(s). With an inductive method in guiding pupils to

perceive reasons for learning, the teacher asks learners why it is important to learn about ..... The teacher then inserts into the blank space what learners are to learn. The answer to the question comes from pupils, not the teacher. The teacher assists learners to determine reasons as to why it is salient to attain relevant ideas and abilities. Additional approaches in guiding pupils to achieve intrinsic motivation to learn include the following

1. ask questions in which there are no right answers.

2. use brain storming techniques whereby learners supply answers to a problem or question, but hear no negative responses in terms of these answers given.

3. guide pupils to discuss a problem area within a small group setting.

4. emphasize a construction activity whereby learners in a small committee plan together, complete the construction activity, and appraise the quality of the finished product.

5. listen to a video tape and develop several main ideas covering its content.

6. comprehend content read by the teacher whereby pupils summarize in a paragraph that which has been read.

7. make an experience chart whereby pupils present ideas to the teacher based upon an excursion the former had. The teacher records the ideas on the chalk board. When the ideas have been presented for teacher recording, pupils read the contents orally. Young learners will need more assistance with the oral reading such as the teacher pointing to words and phrases as learners read the content.

8. practice by pupils in the making of introductions. Pupils need to listen carefully as individuals are introduced to each other. Thus the names of pupils and other vital information provided in the introduction will necessitate the need to listen carefully.

9. rehearse ideas presented by the teacher in a lecture or discussion. Rehearsal of content assists in appraising if one listen carefully to the teacher's presentation.

10. listen to a radio newscast and after its completion, self evaluate to determine what has been acquired.

There are a variety of rich learning opportunities above that should develop increased pupil proficiency in listening. Becoming a good listener is ongoing and continuous. One never reaches perfection by any means. The personal individual can only hope to improve the ability to listen and comprehend. With effort that hope becomes reality. Being an excellent listener helps one to learn more content and realize the optimal self more so. A variety of experiences for pupils helps to eliminate boredom in listening. Intrinsic motivation should be an end result for listening goals to be realized.

Incidental Learning and Listening

Pupils need ample opportunities to learn in an incidental manner. Here, the learning opportunities are not planned for direct achievement of specific objectives. Rather, pupils learn on their own form materials located in different areas of the classroom. For example, the teacher can place diverse illustrations on the bulletin board for pupil viewing. In these situations, the teacher does not use the illustrations for direct teaching experiences. Hopefully, learners will view the illustrations on their own and discuss their contents with others so that listening is involved. at other times, the teacher will use illustrations in unit teaching so that learners may attain stated objectives. A reading corner can further incidental learning on the part of pupils so that improved listening will be an end result. At the reading corner, the teacher should attractively arrange trade books which will entice children to read, discuss, and listen. The trade books should be on different topics and reading levels to provide for all levels of reading interests and achievement. When browsing through different trade books, pupils will orally communicate and listen to what is being said. Objects at a learning center should stimulate learner interest in achieving. When pupils view and discuss each object, they will practice listening.

Interesting and fascinating objects should encourage speaking and listening on the part of pupils.
These objects permit pupils to learn to listen in an incidental manner. Posting pupil art products also should guide pupils to discuss ideas therefrom as well as to listen carefully to each other"s thinking in an informal setting. The teacher here is not using the art products in assisting pupils to attain objectives. Rather, the teacher's role is to encourage pupil interest in listening. Incidental ways of assisting pupils to improve listening capabilities are indeed salient.

Direct Teaching in Listening

There are selected activities which might work well in direct teaching of listening. The overall goal here is to assist learners to become increasingly more proficient in listening. To guide learner attainment of this goal the teacher could have pupils put their heads face down on their desks with eyes closed. The teacher then makes sounds which pupils are to identify without seeing what actually is happening. Thus the teacher may tap her foot and ask learners what caused the sound to occur. Next, the teacher may crush a sheet of paper and pupils are to give the cause for the noise to happen. A cassette recording of birds singing in the out of doors, a door closing, a bee buzzing, and children shouting provide opportunities for additional causes that pupils in the classroom need to identify for the sounds made.

The above named activities involve listening activities outside the framework of the functional listening curriculum. A functional listening curriculum emphasizes that learners listen when a need exists such as in a discussion, to a report given, and to others in a committee setting in which a project is planned, implemented, and evaluated. Incidental experiences, direct teaching of listening, as well as listening within a purposeful activity have their places in learners achieving more proficiency in listening.

Issues in Teaching Listening

There are numerous issues which need to be discussed and

solutions found pertaining to listening in the curriculum. The following are salient:

1. Should predetermined objectives in listening be identified prior to instruction or should these objectives emerge in an ongoing lesson or unit of study?

2. Should objectives for listening be stated in measurable terms or should general objectives suffice?

3. Should there be a scope and sequence of objectives established in teaching listening or should a flexible approach in teaching listening be stressed such as when the need arises?

4. Should the teacher solely ascertain objectives in listening for pupils to attain or should learners be involved in determining these ends?

5. Should the teacher alone appraise pupils in listening or should self evaluation be emphasized in determining the latters' progress in being able to listen well?

6. Should listening be taught as a separate curriculum area or should it be integrated with other academic skills and abilities?

7. Should a hierarchy of listening skills be identified and emphasized in the curriculum or should listening be stressed as necessary in teaching- learning situations?

8. Should time be spent on assisting pupils to improve listening skills through separate periods during the day on achieving proficiency in this area?

9. Should a concerted effort be place in the school curriculum whereby each teacher stresses listening across the curriculum? What if reading, writing, spelling, speaking, and listening across the curriculum are stressed, does this make the scope too broad in the language arts as well as in the total curriculum? Certainly, there are numerous other areas that need to be taught with its salient objectives

such as social studies, science, mathematics, health, art, music, and physical education. Is it possible to stress all these tool subjects or language arts areas across the curriculum? This is a problem of scope in the
curriculum.

10. Should listening in the curriculum be evaluated separately from other areas of the curriculum when reporting pupil progress to parents on report cards? This issue emphasizes how many categories should be reported upon when report cards are issued to parents. Being a good listener is of utmost importance in guiding learners to become interested listeners in order to gain subject matter knowledge from others.

Evaluation of Listening Progress

The teacher needs to be a quality evaluator in order to diagnose pupil difficulty in listening as well as assist learners to remedy deficiencies. Evaluation should be comprehensive in listening achievement. Thus relevant skills in listening are evaluated in terms of breadth or broadness. It would be narrow in comprehensiveness if listening for facts or skimming of ideas presented would be emphasized largely or solely. Skills in the listening curriculum need to be broad. Listening to think critically and creatively as well as to solve problems is of utmost importance. Lower levels of cognition also need to be appraised in terms of learner attainment. These are listening to follow directions, listening carefully in an interview or discussion, listening to obtain specific information, listening to achieve main ideas and generalizations, listening to detect bias, listening to achieve inferences, listening to determine cause and effect, and listening to attain concepts.

Methods of evaluation should include teacher observation, peer evaluation, cooperative appraisal, small group appraisal techniques, pupil self evaluation, video taping classroom results and assessing the quality of listening therein, and tape recording discussion sessions to

appraise the quality of listening.

In addition to listening objectives and appraisal being comprehensive, these objectives should aid learners to develop positive attitudes toward the self and others.With a quality self concept, the pupil increasingly believes he/she can attain at a higher level of listening. Success in learning guides pupils in wanting to attain as optimally as possible. Success in previous learning assists these learners to attain readiness to achieve new content and subject matter. A wholesome self concept indicates to the learner that he/she can attain in an optimal manner. The feelings from within emphasize the learner believes internal locus of control is possible. Internal locus of control emphasizes to the pupil that learning and achievement are possible and not due to random chance factors. A person adhering to external locus of control believes that factors in the environment such as luck, being in the right place at the right time, and personal appearance determines success in learning rather than effort, hard work, and determination. Each person must assume responsibilities to become a good listener. Effort needs to be applied in this direction. One needs to practice in becoming a good listener. Becoming a quality listener is a life time endeavor; it does not happen overnight

In Summary

The teacher needs to establish relevant goals in listening for pupils to achieve. The goals should be comprehensive and achievable. There should be a balance among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor goals. Objectives need to have quality sequence so that pupils individually can be successful learners. Learning opportunities to achieve the objectives should provide for diverse achievement levels of learning among learners. Concrete, semi- concrete, and abstract experiences in listening should be in the offing. Evaluation procedures to ascertain learner progress need to be varied and assist in determining how well pupils are doing in listening. Diagnosis and remediation are inherent concepts when viewing results from the evaluation process.

Each pupil should attain as optimally as possible in listening.